

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 INSE-00 TRSE-00 CA-01 MCT-01
/088 W

-----027651 292119Z /41

R 291950Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4025

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SHUM, PINT, DR
SUBJECT: ALLEGED HUMAN RIGHTS AND ELECTORAL VIOLATIONS

REFS: STATE77400; SANTO DOMINGO 1589, 1513, 1362, 1340, 811,
A-31, A-26, A-23, A-09, A-17

1. CHARACTERIZATION OF PRESENT SITUATION HERE BY ABUD AND CASTILLO IS, IN OUR VIEW, OVERDRAN AND ALARMIST. RECENT EVENTS AND POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE AT THIS TIME, RPT AT THIS TIME, SIMPLY DO NOT ADD UP TO "PICTURE OF DELIBERATE REPRESSION OF THE PRD BY THE BALAGUER GOVERNMENT AND THE ARMED FORCES..."

2. WE HAVE FOLLOWING OBSERVATIONS ON THEIR LIST OF SPECIFIC CLAIMS OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND ELECTORAL VIOLATIONS:

A. TWO RPD LEADERS (UNNAMED) HAD BEEN MURDERED IN THE COURSE OF THE CURRENT POLITICAL CAMPAIGN, ONE IN JAN AND A SECOND IN FEB. WE HAVE REPORTED (A-09) SHOOTING DEATH OF YOUNG PARTICIPANT IN PRD CARVAN JAN 26, IDENTIFIED AS PRD MEMBER (NOT A LEADER); TWO PARDIDO REFORMISTA GUNMEN WERE ARRESTED AND CHARGED IN THE KILLING. WE HAVE RECORD OF A SECOND PRD LEADER HAVING BEEN KILLED IN FEB OR ANYTIME SINCE; CHECK WITH PARTY SOURCES ALSO TURNS
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UP NO CONFIRMATION OF THIS REPORT--ONLY PRD'S OWN SPECULATION THAT ABUD-CASTILLO REPORT PROBABLY BASED ON STABBING DEATH OF MINOR PARTY FUNCTIONARY BY DRUNKEN REFORMISTA, ALSO REPORTED IN A-09. THIS INCIDENT HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH PRD. ONLY OTHER POSSIBILITY IS THAT ABUD-CASTILLO ARE TALKING ABOUT MID-FEB GUNFIGHT IN TOWN OF ESPERANZA (A-17, FEB 22) IN WHICH A PRD ACTIVIST WAS WOUNDED BUT NOT FATALLY. ARMY PRIVATE, HOWEVER, WAS KILLED IN

THAT AFFAIRS.

B. ONE OF THESE MURDERS SUPPOSEDLY TOOK PLACE DURING AN ATTEMPT ON THE LIFE OF JOSE FRANCISCO PENA GOMEZ, WHICH MISFIRED DUE TO A LAST MINUTE CHANGE IN PLANS BY THE PRDLEADER: PENA'S CHARGE THAT REFORMISTA PROVOCATIONS AT PRD RALLY IN SAN CRISTOBAL MARCH 12 WERE REALLY AIMED AT HIM WAS REPORTE (A-26). FACT IS SHOOTING VICTIM IN THAT EPISODE SAID HE WAS NOT INVOLVED IN PRD RALLY, BUT WAS RETURNING FROM COCKFIGHT WHEN A SPENT BULLET STRUCK HIM IN BUTTOCK.

C. ABUD-CASTILLO RECOUNTED A REPORT THAT SOME MILITARY OFFICERS HAD BEEN GIVEN ORDERS TO KILL PENA GOMEZ: PENA LONG HAS BEEN CONTROVERSIAL FIGURE ON DOMINICAN SCENE, AND IS SAID TO BE FEARED AND EVEN HATED IN SOME MILITARY CIRCLES. IT CAN BE FAIRLY ARGUED THAT PENA HIMSELF IS A MAJOR ISSUE IN THIS ELECTION, AND THAT AS SUCH IS TARGET OF STRONG CRITICISM. ALTHOUGH IT HAS NOT YET HAPPENED, VIOLENCE DIRECTED AGAINST HIS PERSON CAN NEVER BE RULED OUT, EITHER AS THE RESULT OF PASSIONS OF THE MOMENT OR EVEN AS DELIBERATE PLOT. IF THERE IS ANYTHING TO THIS ABUD-CASTILLO "REPORT," WE ARE CONFIDENT AUTHORS OF SUCH PLOT WOULD NOT TELL US ABOUT IT. IN ANY CASE, GODR AND THE DOMINICAN MILITARY ARE ON CLEAR NOTICE THAT USG IS LOOKING FOR CLEAN AND OPEN ELECTIONS, AS SO FREQUENTLY PROMISED BY PRESIDENT BALAGUER AND SENIOR ARMED SERVICES REPRESENTATIVES (SEE SD 1340).

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3. THE SEVERAL ASPECTS OF VISIT OF PORTUGUESE PRIME MINISTER SOARES ARE AMPLY COVERED IN SD-1599, 1513 AND A-31 OF MARCH 22. PERHAPS THE PRD CARAVAN MAY HAVE BEEN "HARRASSED UNMERCIFULLY BY THE POLICE IN THE COURSE OF THOSE DEMONSTRATIONS WHICH HAD BEEN PERMITTED." ANOTHER VERSION, HOWEVER, IS THAT THE RIOT POLICE REACTED TO DISTURBANCES CREATED DURING THE POLITICAL RALLY.

4. THE ABUD-CASTILLO STORY ABOUT 15,000 FALSE IDENTITY CARDS AND ILLEGAL VOTER REGISTRATION OF MILITARY PERSONNEL (SD 811) IS LAST MONTH'S NEWSPAPER "CRISIS" WHICH ELECTORAL AUTHORITIES SEEMED TO PUT TO REST TO SATISFACTION OF COMPLAINING PARTIES.

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 INSE-00 TRSE-00 IO-13 CIAE-00

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5. THEIR STATEMENT THAT THERE IS "PERVASIVE BELIEF" HERE THAT
USG SUPPORTS BALAGUER REFLECTS AN ABIDING REALITY: DOMINICANS
AS A RULE DO NOT DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN BALAGUER AS PRESIDENT AND
BALAGUER AS CANDIDATE; HIS TRIPS TO WASHINGTON IN SEPT AND
MIAMI IN JA, AND OCT VISIT HERE OF ASST SEC TODMAN, EVENTS WIDELY
AND CLEVERLY EXPLOITED BY REFORMISTA PARTY, ARE TAKEN AS CLEAR
SIGNS OF WASHINGTON'S FAVOR. IF FREQUENTLY REPEATED USG AND EMBASSY
POLICY OF STRICT NEUTRALITY IN ELECTIONS IS NOT ACCEPTED BY
PRD, IT MAY BE BECAUSE THEY CHOOSE NOT TO BELIEVE IT OF THEIR
OWN POLITICAL PURPOSES.

6. DETENTION AND QUESTIONING OF PENA GOMEZ BY INS WHILE PENA
TRANSITTED US LAST YEAR IS AN INCIDENT UNKNOWN TO US. WE ARE
AWARE OF SUCH AN INCIDENT IN 1974, FOLLOWING WHICH APPROPRIATE
CORRECTIVE ACTION WAS TAKEN. BUT PENA, LIKE MANY WHO PLAYED
PROMINENT ROLES IN 1965 CIVIL WAR AND REMAIN ACTIVE IN PUBLIC
LIFE HERE, STILL HAVE THEIR NAMES IN INS LOBS (DESPITE OUR
EFFORTS TO HAVE THEM LIFTED), AND INCIDENTS SUCH AS ABUD-CASTILLO
DESCRIBE DO OCCUR. IN ANY EVENT, PENA HASNOT COME TO US ABOUT ANY
RECENT INS HARASSMENT, ALTHOUGH OCCASIONALLY WE GET SUCH
COMPLAINTS FROM OTHERS.

7. FINALLY, CONCERNING THE PRESENT ELECTORAL CLIMATE, THERE
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HAVE BEEN ISOLATED EPISODES BUT SINCE THE START OF THE CAMPAIGN
AN AIR OF CALM AND ORDER HAS GENERALLY PREVAILED. THIS IS WIDELY
NOTED, EVEN BY PRD LEADERS (SD-1362 AND 908). FAVORABLE COMPARISONS
WITH THE SITUATION IN THE 1974 ELECTIONS ARE ALSO COMMON. IN
RECENT WEEKS TOP PRD LEADERS HAVE MET ON TWO OCCASIONS WITH
THE PRESIDENT AT THE PALACE, THE TWO SIDES HAVE SIGNED A FORMAL
"NON-AGGRESSION PACT," AND THE MILITARY HAVE MADE PUBLIC PLEDGES
OF NON-INTERFERENCE IN THE ELECTIONS. THESE FACTS SIMPLY DO NOT
AT THIS TIME SQUARE WITH THE OMINOUS PICTURE PAINTED BY ABUD-
CASTILLO IN THEIR MEETING WITH DEPARTMENT OFFICERS. EVEN SO,

THERE ARE APPREHENSIONS THAT THIS SITUATION WILL CHANGE
SUDDENLY AND TENSIONS WHICH ARE NEVER FAR BENEATH THE SURFACE
WILL RISE. ANY SUCH CHANGE WILL BE PROMPTLY REPORTED TO
DEPARTMENT.
HURWITCH

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